
Program Memorandum Intermediaries/Carriers

Department of Health and
Human Services (DHHS)
HEALTH CARE FINANCING
ADMINISTRATION (HCFA)

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Date: FEBRUARY 5, 2001

CHANGE REQUEST 1545

SUBJECT: Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) Programming Errors

This Program Memorandum (PM) provides instructions for those contractors affected by programming errors on claims payment systems which cause inaccuracies on MSNs that do not materially affect benefits. For example, a recent programming error by one of the standard systems maintainers caused MSNs to show a deductible amount remaining that was inaccurate. Another example of a potential programming error could be one data column overwriting another data column.

So long as the claims are correctly paid, it is not necessary to identify the impacted MSNs or reissue them. The resources to identify and reissue all of the documents would not be justified. If contractors feel reissuance is absolutely necessary, they must work with their regional office to identify costs involved before proceeding.

When problems meeting these parameters occur, contractors must take actions that will inform beneficiaries of the situation. These actions should fall within the framework of routine operations. Such actions include, but are not limited to, fielding calls from beneficiaries and alerting customer service representatives of the situation, posting an alert on contractors' local websites, adding a message to IVR script, etc. While all of these solutions may not be possible, contractors should take the most appropriate steps to best mitigate the potential confusion, but not incur special costs. Any communication regarding this type of situation should convey that it was a temporary programming error that has been fixed and is believed to not have affected the beneficiary's benefits. A beneficiary may call the contractor to request a reprint of the MSN with the correct information.

The *effective date* for this PM is February 5, 2001.

The *implementation date* for this PM is February 5, 2001.

These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget.

This PM may be discarded after January 23, 2002.

If you have any questions, contact Julie Simms at 410-786-6343.